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Course mapping for educators

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Keywords

Classroom/didactic teaching

Abstract

Background: Course mapping is one strategy educators can utilize to provide a visual representation of all course components which demonstrates alignment between the course learning outcomes, materials, activities, and assessments. Course mapping is based on the principle of constructive alignment, where the alignment between the learning outcomes, materials, activities, and assessments are emphasized in a student-centered learning environment (Hailikari, et al., 2021). Importantly, course mapping creates transparency.

Objectives: The purpose of this presentation is to describe the benefits of course mapping and identify ways for educators to align their own courses using a course map

Methods: This presentation describes the benefits of a course map, the process of creating a course map, as well as challenges that can arise during the course mapping process. Course maps are typically created using a backward design approach. Backward design begins with the end in mind, with the intended learning outcome first (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The next step is to determine the level of acceptable evidence. This is where faculty would determine how to assess learners on their knowledge and mastery of the information, as well as determine proficiency levels in the form of grading rubrics. The last step is to plan the learning experiences and instruction, where learners are provided with activities and instructional materials to support the mastery of the content (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Completing the course map also serves as an opportunity for faculty members to critically evaluate the components of the course and what learners are asked to complete. Course mapping is one tool

educators can utilize to help ensure students will be successful in the course, by making expectations clearly visible and providing meaningful learning. Course maps organize the structure around each learning module. This explicit alignment allows learners to see the purpose of each of the learning materials, activities, and assessments and how they contribute to mastery of the intended learning outcomes. Course maps can provide the opportunity of scaffolding concepts, as well as assist in revisions of course components as needed. Course mapping is a tool recommended by Quality Matters® (QM) to demonstrate alignment to meet QM standards for certification.

Conclusion: A course map outlines how the course learning outcomes align with materials, activities, and assessments. Course maps are typically built using concepts of backward design. Using this process can assist faculty in promoting student mastery of course outcomes.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the benefits of course mapping
2. Identify steps in course mapping process
3. Describe barriers to the course mapping process

References:

- Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* (4th edition). SRHE & Open University Press: Berkshire, England. Retrieved from https://cetl.ppu.edu/sites/default/files/publications/-John_Biggs_and_Catherine_Tang-Teaching_for_Quali-BookFiorg-.pdf
- Hailikari, T., Virtanen, V., Vesalainen, M., & Postareff, L. (2022). Student perspectives on how different elements of constructive alignment support active learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 23(3), 217–231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787421989160>